

S A U L.

AN

O R A T O R I O.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAUL.
JONATHAN.
DAVID.
MERAB, } Saul's Daughters.
MICHAL, }

DOEG.
ABIATHAR.
Witch of Endor.
Apparition of SAMUEL.
Amalekite.

CHORUS of Women.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

An EPINICION, or Song of Triumph, for the Victory over Goliath and the Philistines.

I.

HOW excellent thy name, O Lord,
In all the world is known!
Above all heav'ns, O king, ador'd,
How hast thou set thy glorious throne!

II.

An infant, rais'd by thy command,
To quell thy rebel foes,
Could fierce Goliath's dreadful hand
Superior in the fight oppose.

III.

Along the monster atheist strode,
With more than human pride;
And armies of the living God,
Exulting in his strength, defy'd.

IV.

The youth, inspir'd by thee, O Lord,
With ease the boaster slew;
Our fainting courage soon restor'd,
And headlong drove that impious crew.

V.

How excellent thy name, O Lord,
In all the world is known!
Above all heav'ns, O king, ador'd,
How hast thou set thy glorious throne!
[Hallelujah.]

S C E N E II.

Saul, Jonathan, Merab, Michal, &c. and ABNER
introducing David.

RECITATIVE.

Mich. He comes! —

AIR.

O godlike youth! by all confess'd
Of human race the pride!
O virgin among women blest,
Whom Heav'n ordains thy bride!
But ah! how strong a bar I see
Betwixt my happiness and me!

RECITATIVE.

Jon. Behold, O king, the brave victorious youth
And in his hand the haughty giant's head.
Saul. Young man, whose son art thou?
Dav. The son of Jesse,
Thy faithful servant, and a Bethlehemite.

A

Saul. Return no more to Jesse: stay with me.
And, as an earnest of my future favour,
Thou shalt espouse my daughter: small reward
Of such desert! Since to thy arm alone
We owe our safety, peace, and liberty.

AIR.

David. O king, your favours, with delight
I take, but must refuse your praise;
For ev'ry pious Israelite
To God alone that tribute pays:
Through him we put to flight our foes;
And in his name
We trod them under that against us rose.

RECITATIVE.

Jon. O early piety! O modest merit!
In this embrace my heart bestows itself.
Henceforth, thou noble youth, accept my friendship,
And Jonathan and David are but one.

RECITATIVE.

Mer. Yet think with whom you stoop to link
yourself;
How poor in fortune, and in birth how low!
[*Aside to Jonath.*

AIR.

Jon. Birth and fortune I despise! [To Merab.
From virtue let my friendship rise.
No titles proud thy stem adorn; [To David.
Yet born of God, is nobly born:
And of his gifts so rich thy store;
That Ophir to thy wealth is poor.

RECITATIVE.

Saul. Thou, Merab, first in birth, be first in
honour:

Thine be the valiant youth, whose arm has sav'd
Thy country from her foes.

Mer. [*Aside.*] O mean alliance!

AIR.

Mich. My soul rejects the thought with scorn,
That such a boy, till now unknown,
Of poor plebeian parents born,
Should mix with royal blood his own!
'Tho' Saul's commands I can't decline,
I must prevent his low design,
And save the honour of his line.

AIR.

Mich. See with what a scornful air
She the precious gift receives!
Tho' e'er so noble, or so fair,
She cannot merit what he gives.
Ah! lovely youth! wast thou design'd
With that proud beauty to be join'd!

SCENE III.

Saul, Michal, &c. and Chorus of Women.

RECITATIVE.

Mich. Already see the daughters of the land,
In joyful dance, with instruments of musick,
Come to congratulate your victory.

Chorus of Women alternately.

I.

Welcome, welcome, mighty king!
Welcome all who conquest bring!

II.

Welcome, David, warlike boy,
Author of our present joy!

III.

Saul, who hast thy thousands slain,
Welcome to thy friends again!

IV.

David his ten thousands slew;
Ten thousand praises are his due!

RECITATIVE.

Saul. What do I hear! Am I then sunk so low,
To have this upstart boy prefer'd before me!

CHORUS.

David his ten thousands slew;
Ten thousand praises are his due!

RECITATIVE accompanied.

Saul. To him ten thousands! and to me but
thousands!
What can they give him more, except the kingdom!

AIR.

With rage I shall burst his praises to hear!
Oh! how I both hate the stripling, and fear!
What mortal a rival in glory can bear? [*Ex.*]

SCENE IV.

RECITATIVE.

Jon. Imprudent woman! your ill-tim'd com-
parisons,
I fear, have injur'd him you meant to honour.
Saul's furious look, as he departed hence,
Too plainly shew'd the tempest of his soul.

Mich. 'Tis but his old disease, which thou can't
cure. [*To David.*

O take thy harp, and as thou oft hast done,
From the king's breast expel the raging fiend,
And sooth his tortur'd soul with sounds divine.
[*Exit David.*

AIR.

Fell rage and black despair possess
With horrid sway the monarch's breast;
When David with celestial fire
Struck the sweet persuasive lyre:
Soft gliding down his ravish'd ears,
The healing sounds dispel his cares;
Despair and rage at once are gone,
And peace and hope resume the throne.

SCENE V.

Saul, David, Jonathan, Merab, Michal, Abner,
and Abiathar.

RECITATIVE.

Jon. Rack'd with infernal pains, e'en now the king
Comes forth, and mutters horrid words, which hell,
No human tongue, has taught him.

AIR.

Dav. O Lord, whose mercies numberless
O'er all thy works prevail,
Tho' daily man thy law transgress,
Thy patience cannot fail:
If yet his sin be not too great,
The busy fiend controul;
Yet longer for repentance wait,
And heal his wounded soul.

SOLO.

RECITATIVE.

Jon. 'Tis all in vain, his fury still continues:
With wild distraction on my friend he stares,
Stamps on the ground, and seems intent on mischief.

AIR.

Saul. A serpent in my bosom warm'd
Would sting me to the heart;
But of his venom soon disarm'd,
Himself shall feel the smart.
Ambitious boy! now learn, what danger
It is to rouse a monarch's anger!
[*Throws his javelin.*—Exit David.]

RECITATIVE.

Saul. Has he escap'd my rage?
I charge thee, Jonathan, upon thy duty,
And all on your allegiance, to destroy
This bold, aspiring youth; for while he lives,
I am not safe. Reply not, but obey. [Exit.]

AIR.

Mich. Capricious man, in humour lost,
By every wind of passion tost,
Now sets his vassal on the throne,
Then low as earth he casts him down:
His temper knows no middle state,
Extreme alike, in love and hate,

SCENE VI.

RECITATIVE accompanied.

Jon. O filial piety! O sacred friendship!
How shall I reconcile you!—Cruel father!
Your just commands I always have obey'd:
But to destroy my friend! the brave, the virtuous,
The godlike David! Israel's defender,
And terror of her foes!—to disobey you—
What shall I call it?—'Tis an act of duty
To God—to David—nay, indeed, to you.

AIR.

No, cruel father, no:
Your hard commands I can't obey.
Shall I with sacrilegious blow
Take pious David's life away!
No, with my life I must defend,
Against the world, my best, my dearest
friend.

CHORUS.

Preserve him for the glory of thy name;
Thy people's safety, and the heathen's shame.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CHORUS.

ENVY! eldest-born of hell!
Cease in human breasts to dwell!
Ever at all good repining,
Still the happy undermining!

God and man by thee infected,
Thou by god and man detested!
Most thyself thou dost torment,
At once the crime and punishment.
Hide thee in the blackest night:
Virtue sickens at the sight!
Hence, thou eldest-born of hell!
Cease in human breasts to dwell.

SCENE II.

Jonathan and David.

RECITATIVE.

Jon. Ah! dearest friend, undone by too much
virtue!

Think you an evil spirit was the cause
Of all my father's rage? It was, indeed,
A spirit of envy, and of mortal hate
He has resolv'd your death; and sternly charg'd
His whole retinue, me especially,
To execute his vengeance.

AIR.

But sooner Jordan's stream, I swear,
Back to his spring shall swiftly roll,
Than I consent to hurt a hair
Of thee, thou darling of my soul.

RECITATIVE.

Dav. O strange vicissitude! but yesterday
He thought me worthy of his daughter's love;
To day he seeks my life.

Jon. My sister Merab, by his own gift thy right,
He has bestow'd on Adriel.

Dav. O, my prince, would that were all!
It would not grieve me much. The scornful maid
(Didst thou observe?) with such disdainful pride
Receiv'd the king's command! But lovely Michal,
As mild as she is fair, outstrips all praise.

AIR.

Such haughty beauties rather move
Aversion, than engage our love.
They only can our cares beguile,
Who gently speak, and sweetly smile.
If virtue in that dress appear,
Who, that sees, can love forbear?

RECITATIVE.

Jon. My father comes. Retire, my friend, while I
With peaceful accents try to calm his rage.

[Exit David.]

SCENE III.

Saul and Jonathan.

Saul. Hast thou obey'd my orders, and destroy'd
My mortal enemy, the son of Jesse?

Jon. Alas, my father! he your enemy?
Say rather, he has done important service
To you, and to the nation; hazarded
His life for both, and slain our giant foe,
Whose presence made the boldest of us tremble.

AIR.

Sin not, O king, against the youth
Who ne'er offended you:
Think, to his loyalty and truth
What great rewards are due!
Think, with what joy this godlike man
You saw, that glorious day!
Think, and with ruin, if you can,
Such services repay.

Saul. As great Jehovah lives, I swear,
The youth shall not be slain:
Bid him return, and void of fear
Adorn our court again,

Jon. From cities storm'd, and battles won,
What glory can accrue?
By this the hero best is known;
He can himself subdue.
Wilest and greatest of his kind,
Who can in reason's fetters bind
The madness of his angry mind!

RECITATIVE.

Appear, my friend.

SCENE IV.

Enter David.

RECITATIVE.

Saul. No more imagine danger.
Be first in our esteem; with wonted valour
Repel the insults of the Philistines;
And, as a proof of my sincerity,
(O hardness to dissemble!) instantly
Espouse my daughter Michal.

AIR.

Dav. Your words, O king, my loyal heart
With double ardour fire:
If God his usual aid impart,
Your foes shall feel what you inspire.
In all the dangers of the field,
The great Jehovah is my shield.

[*Exit David and Jon.*]

RECITATIVE.

Saul. Yes, he shall wed my daughter!---but
how long
Shall he enjoy her!--he shall lead my armies!
But have the Philistines no darts, no swords,
To pierce the heart of David? Yes, this once
To them I leave him; they shall do me right!

SCENE V.

David and Michal.

Mich. A father's will has authoriz'd my love;
No longer, Michal, then attempt to hide
The secret of thy soul. I love thee, David,
And long have lov'd. Thy virtue was the cause;
And that be my defence.

DUET.

Mich. O fairest of ten thousand fair,
Yet for thy virtue more admir'd!
Thy words and actions all declare
The wisdom by thy God inspir'd.

Dav. O lovely maid! thy form beheld,
Above all beauty charms our eyes:
Yet still, within that form conceal'd,
Thy mind, a greater beauty, lies.

Bob. How well, in thee, does Heav'n at last
Compensate all my sorrows past! [*Ex.*]

CHORUS.

Is there a man, who all his ways
Directs, his God alone to please?
In vain his foes against him move:
Superior pow'r their hate disarms,
He makes them yield to virtue's charms,
And melts their fury down to love.

A CONCERTO.

SCENE VI.

David and Michal.

RECITATIVE.

Dav. Thy father is as cruel, and as false,
As thou art kind and true. When I approach'd him,
New from the slaughter of his enemies,
His eyes with fury flam'd; his arm he rais'd,
With rage grown stronger; by my guiltless head
The javelin whizzing flew, and in the wall

Mock'd once again his impotence of malice.

DUET.

Dav. At persecution I can laugh;
No fear my soul can move,
In God's protection safe,
And blest in Michal's love.

Mich. Ah! dearest youth! for thee I fear!
Fly!--be gone!--for death is near!

Dav. Fear not, lovely fair, for me:
Death, where thou art cannot be.
Smile, and danger is no more.

Mich. Fly!--for death is at the door!
See the murder'ous band comes on!
Stay no longer! Fly!--be gone!

SCENE VII.

Michal and Doeg.

RECITATIVE.

Mich. Whom dost thou seek? and who has sent
thee hither?

Doeg. I seek for David; and am sent by Saul.

Mich. Thy errand?

Doeg. 'Tis a summons to the court.

Mich. Say, he is sick.

Doeg. In sickness, or in health,
Alive or dead, he must be brought to Saul.
Shew me his chamber.

[*David's bed discover'd with an image in it.*
Do you mock the king?
This disappointment will enrage him more:
Then tremble for th' event. [*Exit.*]

AIR.

Mich. No; let the guilty tremble
At ev'ry thought of danger near.
Tho' numbers, arm'd with death, assemble,
My innocence disdains to fear.
Tho' great their power as their spite,
Undaunted still, my soul, remain;
For greater is Jehovah's might,
And will their lawless force restrain.

SCENE VIII.

SYMPHONY.

Saul at the Feast of the New Moon.

RECITATIVE accompanied.

The time is come, when I shall take
My full revenge on Jesse's son;
No longer shall the stripling make
His sovereign totter on the throne.
He dies, this blaster of my fame,
Bane of my peace, and author of my shame.

SCENE IX.

Saul, Jonathan, &c.

RECITATIVE.

Saul. Where is the son of Jesse? Comes he not
To grace our feast?

Jon. He earnestly ask'd leave
To go to Bethlem, where his father's house,
At solemn rites of annual sacrifice,
Requir'd his presence.

Saul. O perverse! rebellious!
Thinks thou, I do not know, that thou hast chose
The son of Jesse to thy own confusion?
The world will say, thou art no son of mine,
Who thus canst love the man I hate; the man
Who, if he lives, will rob thee of thy crown.
Send, fetch him hither; for the wretch must die.

Jon. What has he done? and wherefore must he die?
Saul. Dar'st thou oppose my will? Die then thyself.

[*Throws his javelin,---Exit Jon. then Saul.*]

CHORUS.

O fatal consequence

Of rage, by reason uncontroul'd !

With ev'ry law he can dispense ;

No ties the furious monster hold :

From crime to crime he blindly goes,

Nor end, but with his own destruction, knows.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Saul disguised at Endor.

RECITATIVE accompanied.

WRETCH that I am! of my own ruin author !

Where are all my old supports ? The valiant youth,

Whose very name was terror to my foes,

My rage has drove away. Of God forsaken,

In vain I ask his counsel ! He vouchsafes

No answer to the sons of disobedience !

E'en my own courage fails me ?---Can it be ?

Is Saul become a coward ?---I'll not believe it !

If heav'n denies thee aid, seek it from hell !

'Tis said, here lives a woman close familiar

With th' enemy of mankind. Her I'll consult,

And know the worst. Her art is death by law ;

And, while I minded law, sure death attended

Such horrid practices : yet, O hard fate !

Myself am now reduc'd to ask the counsel

Of those I once abhorr'd !

S C E N E II.

Saul and the Witch of Endor.

RECITATIVE.

Witch. With me what would'st thou ?*Saul.* I wou'd that by thy art thou bring me up
The man whom I shall name.*Witch.* Alas ! thou know'st

How Saul has cut off those who use this art.

Would'st thou ensnare me ?

Saul. As Jehovah lives,
On this account no mischief shall befall thee.*Witch.* Whom shall I bring up to thee ?*Saul.* Bring up Samuel.

AIR.

Witch. Infernal spirits, by whose pow'r

Departed ghosts in living forms appear,

Add horror to the midnight hour,

And chill the boldest hearts with fear ;

To this stranger's wond'ring eyes,

Let the prophet Samuel rise.

S C E N E III.

Apparition of Samuel and Saul.

RECITATIVE accompanied.

Sam. Why hast thou forc'd me from the realms
of peace

Back to this world of woe ?

Saul. O holy prophet !

Refuse me not thy aid in this distress.

The num'rous foe stands ready for the battle ;

God has forsaken me : no more he answers

By prophets or by dreams. No hope remains,

Unless I learn of thee what course to take.

Sam. Hath God forsaken thee ? And dost thou
ask

My counsel ? Did I not foretel thy fate,

When, madly disobedient, thou didst spare

The curs'd Amalekite, and on the spoil

Didst fly rapacious ? Therefore God this day
Hath verified my words in thy destruction ;
Hath rent the kingdom from thee, and bestow'd it
On David, whom thou hatest for his virtue.
Thou and thy sons shall be with me to-morrow,
And Israel by Philistine arms shall fall.
The Lord hath said it : he will make it good.

S C E N E IV.

SYMPHONY.

David, &c. To them an Amalekite.

RECITATIVE.

Dav. Whence comest thou ?*Amal.* Out of the camp of Israel.*Dav.* Thou canst inform me then : how went
the battle ?*Amal.* The people, put to flight, in numbers
fell,

And Saul, and Jonathan his son, are dead.

Dav. Alas ! my brother!--but how know'st
thou

That they are dead ?

Amal. Upon mount Gilboa

I met with Saul, just fall'n upon his spear.

Swiftly the foe pursu'd. He cry'd to me,

Begg'd me to finish his imperfect work,

And end a life of pain and ignominy.

I knew he could not live, and therefore slew him ;

Took from his head the crown, and from his arms

The brace-lets, and have brought them to my lord.

Dav. Whence art thou ?*Amal.* I am an Amalekite.

AIR.

Dav. Impious wretch, of race accurs'd !

And of all that race the worst !

How hast thou dar'd to lift thy sword

Against th' anointed of the Lord ?

Fall on him---smite him---let him die ;

[To one of his Attendants, who kills the Amalekite.]

On thy own head thy blood will lie ;

Since thy own mouth has testified,

By thee the Lord's anointed dy'd.

S C E N E V.

[A March.]

ELEGY on the Death of Saul and Jonathan.

CHORUS I.

Mourn, Israel, mourn, thy beauty lost,

Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain.

How have thy fairest hopes been cross'd !

What heaps of mighty warriors strew the plain !

AIR II.

O let it not in Gath be heard,

The news in Askelon let none proclaim ;

Lest we, whom once so much they fear'd,

Be by their women now despis'd,

And lest the daughters of the uncircumcis'd

Rejoice and triumph in our shame.

AIR III.

From this unhappy day,

No more, ye Gilboan hills, on you

Descend refreshing rain or kindly dew,

Which erst your heads with plenty crown'd ;

Since there the shield of Saul, in arms renown'd,

Was vilely cast away.

AIR IV.

Brave Jonathan his bow ne'er drew,

But wing'd with death his arrow flew,

And drank the blood of slaughter'd foes ;
 Nor drew great Saul his sword in vain ;
 It reek'd, where'er he dealt his blows,
 With entrails of the mighty slain.

CHORUS V.

Eagles were not so swift as they,
 Nor lions with so strong a grasp held fast and tore
 the prey.

AIR VI.

In sweetest harmony they liv'd,
 Nor death their union could divide :
 The pious son ne'er left his father's side,
 But him defending bravely dy'd ;
 A loss too great to be surviv'd !

AIR VII.

For Saul, ye maids of Israel, moan,
 To whose indulgent care
 You owe the scarlet and the gold you wear,
 And all the pomp in which your beauty long has
 shone.

CHORUS VIII.

O fatal day ! How low the mighty lie !
Dav. O Jonathan ! how nobly didst thou die,
 For thy king and country slain !
 For thee, my brother Jonathan,
 How great is my distress !
 What language can my grief express ?

Great was the pleasure I enjoy'd in thee !
 And more than woman's love thy wondrous love to
 me !

CHORUS IX.

O fatal day ! How low the mighty lie !
 Where, Israel, is thy glory fled ?
 Spoil'd of thy arms, and sunk in infamy,
 How canst thou raise again thy drooping head !

RECITATIVE.

Abia. Ye men of Judah weep no more ;
 Let gladness reign in all our host :
 For pious David will restore
 What Saul by disobedience lost.
 The Lord of Hosts is David's friend,
 And conquest will his arms attend.

CHORUS.

Gird on thy sword, thou man of might,
 Pursue thy wonted fame :
 Go on, be prosperous in fight,
 Retrieve the Hebrew name.
 Thy strong right-hand, with terror arm'd,
 Shall thy obdurate foes dismay ;
 While others, by thy virtue charm'd,
 Shall croud to own thy righteous sway.

7 MA 55

